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The Patmos Portrait of Jesus Christ

By Gerhard Hulsebus

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**THE PATMOS PORTRAIT
OF
JESUS CHRIST**

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THE PATMOS PORTRAIT *of* JESUS CHRIST

BY
GERHARD HULSEBUS
Author of "Seven Days With Jesus"

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THE AUTHOR.

THE MAN

"One like unto a son of man"

Of all the sons of Adam there is not one other whom we might properly call *The Man*. There has not been another perfect type among them; all are abnormal and deformed, by reason of their sin both inherited and actual. Jesus, the Son of God, is also The Man. There is no deformity nor abnormality in Him; He is the perfect man.

".....*like unto a son of man.*" His birth in certain particulars was similar to that of other children. At the age of twelve, He had grown both in body and mind. He continued to grow and was subject unto His parents like an ordinary child would have been. At the age of thirty, He had the form and bearing of a real man. As a boy, He was different from other boys and as a man, He was different from other men, but only in the sense that this is also true of every other boy and man.

The development of His body and mind was human. His needs and desires were human. He often gave evidence of hunger and thirst and weariness. He had what were for him proper human ambitions as is shown by His temptations, and in His disappointment when the multitude turned away from Him, and in His tears over Jerusalem, when His own people had refused to

But how shall we proceed? We of today have not seen Him in the flesh; there is no photograph of Him extant; nor do we possess an authentic description of His personal appearance.

At first thought, this absence of any knowledge of His personal appearance may seem to be a misfortune, but, upon more mature consideration, it becomes apparent that this is but another of our Heavenly Father's blessings in disguise.

It is a remarkable fact that most people, when uninfluenced by descriptions and objective optical representations, will, after a proper study of Christ, as He is presented in the New Testament, almost unconsciously come to the conclusion that He is the ideal man after the type of the observer's nationality. A Jew imagines Him to have the characteristic features of a Jew. For the Greek, He is a Greek; for the Italian, He is an Italian; for the Spaniard, He is a Spaniard; for the French, He is a Frenchman; for the Chinese, He is a Chinese; for the Teuton, He is a Teuton; for the American Indian, He is an Indian; for the Japanese, He is a Japanese; and for the Negro, He is a Negro. Thus the absence of authentic information about His physical appearance allows every one to form his own picture of his Savior.

How much more easy and edifying it is for us to picture Him with the form and features of those whom we love rather than with the characteristic features of any other nationality or race.

And how much easier it thus becomes for Him to leap over the almost insurmountable barriers of national and racial prejudice and to enter into the confidence, sympathy and affection of each and all of them.

Nor is this a mere figment of the imagination, for, in a very real sense, He does look at us with the eyes of those about us; He speaks to us in the voice of our closest associates; He appeals to us through the needs of our stricken neighbors; He will say at the great judgment, "What ye did or did not do unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did or did not do unto me."

Thanking God for the wisdom and love manifested toward us, His children, in this matter, we shall attempt in this effort, rather to portray His character and spirit than to draw a picture of the physical Christ.

The title of this book we draw from a well-known passage in the book of Revelation, chapter one, verses twelve to sixteen:

"And I turned to see the voice which spake to me. And having turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breast with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

Our purpose in the use of this passage is not

primarily exegetical; indeed we are not minded to follow the usual line of exegesis but to follow somewhat independent lines of interpretation and application. Indeed, if we may be allowed a figure of speech in keeping with our subject, we would here draw a picture based in the impressions and suggestions that come to us from a long and earnest look upon the picture John gives us in that passage, without unqualified regard for what commentators usually say as to the meaning of each of those pregnant phrases.

The pigments which we desire to use for the colors of this sketch we shall find rather in the whole of the Bible, especially in the New Testament, than only in this one book of the Bible, or this single passage.

But the *subjective* ideal, intended to give life and animation to the form, can be gotten only by means of a personal "vision" of the original of the portrait through the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit.

Many of the conceptions of this present book are poetic rather than literal, and much of the language is prose poetry rather than literal prose.

THE MAN

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Of all the sons of Adam there is not one other whom we might properly call *The Man*. There has not been another perfect type among them; all are abnormal and deformed, by reason of their sin both inherited and actual. Jesus, the Son of God, is also The Man. There is no deformity nor abnormality in Him; He is the perfect man.

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The development of His body and mind was human. His needs and desires were human. He often gave evidence of hunger and thirst and weariness. He had what were for him proper human ambitions as is shown by His temptations, and in His disappointment when the multitude turned away from Him, and in His tears over Jerusalem, when His own people had refused to

accept Him as her deliverer and protector. His love of physical life and His dread of death were characteristically human. We submit that, if anyone well informed concerning the feeling of the leaders of the Jews toward Jesus at the time, should for the first time read the account of the Gethsemane struggle, he would inevitably come to the conclusion that the cup to which Jesus referred was, in part at least, the cup of physical death. His aversion to that cup was the aversion of a strong young man of brief career to death. His cry on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?", was inspired by the same human horror of death. The "me" was His human life. The "me" died on the cross, and died hard. How could a man in the full vigor of his physical strength die otherwise!

He was a man; every inch a man.

And what a man!

Shall we not for our purpose here, compare Him with other men?

Let Him stand beside Moses, the man whose character and achievements loom large and lustrous on the early horizon of authentic history. Moses was undoubtedly the greatest emancipator and lawgiver of ancient times, and the beneficent influence of his work extends even to our own day. Beside this mighty emancipator, who, by means of scourge, and devastation, and pestilence, and thunderbolts, and darkness, and death, liberated the Hebrew slaves from Pharaoh, their cruel task-

master, and, after many vicissitudes, brought them to the land which flowed with milk and honey, stands the calm and majestic Jesus; and these simple but potent words fall from His lips, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Nor were these idle words, for, where Moses liberated his thousands, the truth which Jesus taught has liberated its millions; and not from physical bondage only, although it did that, but from mental and spiritual bondage as well. And after many vicissitudes this truth has led these liberated slaves to the land where the milk and honey of modern civilization flow, though they have not yet fully possessed the land.

Moses went up into a mountain where, amid thunder, and lightning, and fire, and smoke, he received the law from God and, with countenance so radiant that the people could not bear to look upon it, returned to deliver it to the nation and through them to the whole world. That was indeed a great achievement, but the essence of that law was, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Jesus also went up into a mountain "and he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun and his garments became white as the light"; and "a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." And this is what we hear Him say, "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you,

pray for them that despitefully use you." "To him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also." "Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again." "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

Surely as a lawgiver Jesus outshines Moses as the noonday sun outshines the moon.

Shall we now compare Him with the great David?

Great bravery, unusual executive ability and deep poetic insight are some of the qualities in the character of David.

Has the "meek and lowly Jesus" anything in common with the bravery of David, who, when but a boy laid low the great bragging giant and afterward slew his tens of thousands, and overcame all his enemies? Although Jesus is often referred to as a lamb, there was no lack of the heroic in His character, and, therefore, He is described as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He had the courage that makes heroes, but it was not that of the soldier which is founded upon the strength of his armor, the excellency of his weapon and the skill of his hand. His was the courage of a man who has confidence in the cause which he represents and for which he is willing to fight and die. The greatest heroes are not those who are always victorious in battle. They are those who are willing to die for a cause. Jesus was undoubtedly a greater hero than David for He went up against greater foes than David ever

met and He attested his bravery by draining the death cup of Gethsemane to its dregs and yielding Himself to the death of the Cross. He died that we might live.

Coming to another subject, the greatest poet is he who can conceive the richest, deepest and most important truths and clothe them in the most beautiful and expressive language. According to this standard David was great but Jesus was the greatest of all. Note the Beatitudes; read the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Vine and the Branches; get the full meaning of His "farewell" in John fourteenth chapter.

And the greatest ruler is he whose laws are voluntarily obeyed by the greatest number of loyal subjects. David was a great king but Jesus, judged by this standard alone, is the King of kings.

But, now, let us compare Him with certain wise men and philosophers, Solomon, Aristotle, Plato and others. These men have many noted sayings to their credit, discovered and promulgated many great and valuable truths and sought diligently, although in vain, for the *summum bonum*. The difference between them and Jesus is that they were seekers after truth while He was the *Truth itself*. They tried to discover the chief good with their minds while He also revealed it in His life as they could not. They sought for light with their intellects but His life was the light of men. Most philosophers, both ancient

and modern, have exercised their great intellectual powers in a strenuous endeavor to analyze life and then to translate it into intellectual terms. Their efforts have been vain however to a large degree for life is of such an immaterial and elusive character that it cannot be imprisoned in intellectual terms. All that we can really do with life is to live it, but we may live it in a good or an evil manner. The chief good, the *summum bonum*, according to Jesus, is to be good and live a good life. The wisest man is not he who knows the most but he who lives the best. According to this standard, Jesus was certainly immeasurably wiser than any other wise men of the ages.

Let us now turn to that picturesque but heroic character, Elijah, who fought so vehemently against a false religion of his day. With what sublime faith he met the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal singlehanded on Mt. Carmel and vanquished them, in the face of the promised protection of Queen Jezebel! Is there any occurrence in the life of Jesus comparable with Elijah on Mt. Carmel? Did sham in religion stir Him as much as it had Elijah of old? Listen to these words as they flow from His lips like molten lava from a volcano:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith: but these ye ought to have done and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain out gnats and swallow the camel."

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee! cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.....Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?"

Nor were these words uttered in secret. This was an open denunciation of those who were high in authority, the party which indeed finally accomplished His death. And, whereas Elijah fought against the priests of a "foreign" religion, Jesus fought against those who were believed to be the legitimate representatives of Jehovah.

We might compare Jesus with many other great and good men, and we should learn that even in those qualities in which they were strongest He was their superior. And when we speak of that quality which constituted the pre-eminent glory of His life, genuine unselfish devotion to the welfare of His fellowmen, we find no one so great as He. In love, and kindness, and friendliness, and helpfulness He has no peer.

What a wonderful man He was? More persistent and patient than Noah; had greater faith and was more obedient and gentle than Abraham; was a greater emancipator and lawgiver

than Moses; a greater king than David; wiser by far than Solomon; a more heroic defender of the faith than Elijah; and more sympathetic and kind than Jeremiah the weeping prophet. A man, an all-round, perfectly-balanced man He was.

And yet He was not a cold, unapproachable Colossus, towering high and forbidding above His fellows. On the contrary, the great variety of His matchless qualities have afforded avenues of approach for all classes and conditions of men. He is the kind, affectionate, sympathetic, loving Big Brother of every man, woman and child that has ever lived.

THE GARMENT HE WORE

"Clothed with a garment"

The Revelator states that Jesus Christ was "clothed with a garment down to the foot," but he makes no attempt to describe this garment. Daniel, who had a similar vision, says that he was "clothed in linen." Of course, these expressions are not to be taken literally. They do not refer to the clothing which He wore while on earth. He clothed himself in the flesh while among men. In a very real sense the body, not only of Jesus but of every human being, constitutes the garment of the soul. This statement does not contradict the fact that the body is also the instrument of the soul.

There are at least three different views of the body of Jesus and that which it clothed.

Some believe that His body was all there was to His being. This is saying in effect that whereas man by means of his physical senses has not been able to get the feel of anything but matter, therefore, matter alone exists, and that which men call soul and spirit is a mere chimera of the human brain. The phenomenon of life, they say, is the resultant of the interaction of material molecules and atoms.

This theory breaks down as a result of its inherent incredibility. There is scarcely an analogy in human experience which supports it. On

the contrary, everything points to the fact that matter, instead of being the originator of life, is only its instrument and cloak. Matter, when left to its own tendencies, not only does not produce organisms and life, but it has a strong tendency to disintegrate and become static.

Human ingenuity has produced the great railroad locomotive. With a skillful engineer at the throttle, it glides resistlessly along the smooth rails, drawing a great train laden with human lives behind itself. But suddenly heart failure strikes down the engineer. The material is still all intact. Even the body of the engineer lies in the cab. But, if that life is not replaced with another, what happens? The train still moves on, but, ere long, it reaches a down grade. The life which should have employed the material muscles to close the throttle and put on the brakes has left the body. The great engine, obeying mechanical laws, rushes forward and races down the grade at a terrific pace. Striking a sharp curve, it leaves the track and rolls down the mountainside dragging the train with its hundreds of passengers after it. Down, down it plunges into a raging mountain stream, churns about an instant and explodes with a terrific concussion. Soon all is quiet, even in the bodies of the many human beings who thus went down to their death.

The inherent incredibility of *materialism*, as this theory is designated, is so palpable that this theory is being quite generally thrown upon the

scrapheap. The body is not all there is to man. Jesus wore a garment of flesh but there was something within the garment which was vastly greater than the garment itself.

There is another school of thought which says that it is evident that there was something within the "garment" but that it was only what is in other men. In other words, Jesus was a man and nothing more. He was not divine.

If those who maintain this theory are logical, they find very much difficulty in dealing with the only authentic record of His life which we have, the New Testament. They must explain away His miraculous conception, the miracles which He wrought, the divinity of His attitude toward suffering humanity, His divine spirit of self-sacrifice, His resurrection and ascension and the untold influence He has had in the world. In order to accomplish this herculean task, those who maintain this view, have found it necessary to take most extraordinary liberties with the text of Holy Scripture.

But why should any man attempt to maintain such a theory in the face of such insurmountable difficulties? The answer is simple, but it reaches to the profound depths of unregenerated human nature. Man, in his intellectual pride, has conceived the idea that he, man, is the highest form of being; that the human intellect is the highest form of intelligence. This idea has become a creed and is maintained with almost fanatic dogmatism. This reveals the reason for the frantic

and persistent effort to prove that Jesus was only a man, for, if He was anything more, then this dogma falls to the ground.

But this course of reasoning cannot stop here. If He was not more than a man, He must either have been mistaken or He must have been a deceiver when He claimed divinity for Himself. He was, according to this school, a mere religious enthusiast, and many of His statements were the product of a fevered brain, some even going so far as to intimate that He was suffering from a species of mental insanity.

How marvelous! The remarkable impression which Jesus made upon His generation; the beautiful and powerful character which we find sketched in the Gospels; the wonderful regenerating influence which His life and teachings have had in the lives of countless thousands of individuals; and the tremendous transformation He has wrought among the nations of men—all this would have to be accounted for in the light of the claim made that He was a sort of semi-lunatic.

The inherent improbability of this theory is quite as great as is that of materialism. The idea that man is the highest form of being and that therefore Jesus must have been only a man, appeals neither to common sense nor does it conform to the facts of human experience.

The third view is represented by those who, with Peter and James and John, have been upon the Mount of Transfiguration where they have been permitted to behold the essential person of

The Christ shining through His garments of flesh and to hear the voice speaking from the invisible glory, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"; and this view is represented also by those who, with Saul of Tarsus, after the eyes of their spiritual understanding having been opened by a revelation of His divine glory, have humbly sat at the feet of some godly Ananias and learned the simple truth concerning The Christ; and those who have been in some upper chamber where the Spirit of truth descended upon them and permitted them to cast one look behind the veil of His flesh. When these are asked the question, "And whom do ye say that I the Son of Man am?", their unanimous response is, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus' answer to Peter is very significant. It reveals the reason why men of a very high order of intelligence have not been able to understand Him. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Those who attempt to arrive at an understanding of the character of Jesus Christ by analyzing the robe of His flesh and blood, must, in the very nature of the case, remain in darkness as to His essential divinity, no matter what they may find as to the mere human Jesus. Our Heavenly Father alone can reveal to us the divine nature of His Son through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Such discovery is made only through the illumination of the Spirit of God.

Those who are born again into the realm of light and truth so that they are enabled to perceive the things of the Kingdom of God are positive that within the robe of flesh in which Jesus went about among men there dwelt the Christ, the pre-existent Son of the living God.

Here the question naturally arises, if this be true, then why did He lay aside the royal robe which He must have worn at His Father's court and don the humble robe of human flesh? Why did He, who was a member of the God-head at the time when the plan for the universe was laid; He through whom this world and all that therein is, was brought into being—why did this one lay aside his full royalty and step down to the level of human poverty and frailty? Notice that His action is not that of a prince who, in order to gratify a passing whim puts on the garments of a peasant and travels in them *incognito* for a time, only to exchange them for his royal robes again whenever the notion strikes him. Jesus was really what His literal clothes and the garment of His flesh indicated, a real man, experiencing the limitations, needs and aspirations of a man.

You ask, How can this be? How could the divine Christ be so human that He loved His human life, that He shuddered at the thought of physical death? The simple answer is that this is a part of the mystery of divinity which it is not given to finite mind to comprehend. It might also be added that this simple, almost naive presentation

of the divine-human Jesus is in essential accord with the sacred Scriptures throughout; and also, that it is beset with far fewer difficulties than the most elaborate explanation the most learned denier of the divinity of Jesus Christ can offer.

But why did He clothe Himself in the garb of humanity when He thus came upon the earth?

In order to answer this question properly, it is necessary to take note of three important facts. The first is, that humanity had fallen into a state of extreme misery, and that it had no power to extricate itself. The second is, that He had an intense love for men whom He had brought into being, and desired that they should be restored to bliss. And the third is, that He alone possessed the power so to restore them.

Granted, then, that the Second Person in the God-head had, on account of His great love for mankind, determined to save them, how could He best accomplish this purpose?

Men have a well nigh universal inclination to blame some one else for whatever misfortunes befall them. This is true even when their own conduct is directly responsible for their misfortune. Now it is evident that the misery into which mankind has fallen is the direct consequence of their own individual and collective sin; but, on account of their inclination to transfer guilt, they have sought to place the blame for their deplorable condition upon some one else. Adam, you remember, blamed Eve and Eve blamed the Serpent; but, when Adam had to

earn his bread by the sweat of his brow and Eve felt the terrible pains of childbirth, it is probable that they both blamed God for allowing the Serpent to enter the garden. Since then it has always been fashionable to take the good things of life as a matter of course and to blame God for all the misery, and woe, and anguish which has come into the world. As a result, love and reverence for God has died out in the human heart, and suspicion and fear and hatred have taken their place. Men did not cease to worship but instead of adoring God and bringing sacrifices of love to the Giver of every true and perfect gift, their worship consisted in endeavors to appease the wrath of an angry god and to purchase his favor.

Among the chosen people of Israel occasionally a lonely seer caught a transient glimpse of Christ's face and broke into raptures about the lovingkindness and tender mercy of God evidencing itself in such a revelation; but the people in general even of that favored nation did not understand Him; while those nations who served idols had no sense of God. But the attitude of pagan peoples toward the gods they did worship was that of fear, and distrust, and hatred.

Now when we remember that God was the only one who could save mankind and that even He could not save them without an effort on their part, that is, without their willing coöperation, we see what a difficulty the well-nigh universal human distrust of God was. Man's reconcilia-

tion to God was absolutely necessary to the furtherance of the plan of salvation.

For this purpose, then, Christ was born into the flesh. He put on the robe of flesh and lived among men in order to break down their prejudices and win their confidence so that He might be able to reveal to them the real nature of God. During His life on earth, He showed His love and devotion to man in such an unmistakable way that even "a way-faring man, though a fool", can know it; and then, by proving His own divinity, His oneness with God, He revealed one of the most wonderful of all truths, namely, that God, instead of being a harsh and cruel monster, is in very reality Love. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

What a wonderful revelation this was to mankind, and what a wonderful reconciliation of men it has brought about! Could this have been accomplished by any other means?

But another achievement waited on the Son of Man. On account of the blindness which sin had brought with it, mankind had lost the ability to live in happiness and contentment; in other words, a life in harmony with the will of their Heavenly Father; so Jesus living before them gave them a perfect model to pattern after. And what a model it is! How different from those which human philosophers had attempted to sketch! No one has yet been able to form a perfect copy of it, but those who have shaped their lives most nearly in accordance with this model

have come nearest to achieving the *summum bonum* of life.

It is one thing, however, to have a perfect model, quite another to imitate it. Fallen humanity left to itself, has not the power to imitate Jesus, therefore He needed to go further in order to save them. So He went about among men doing them good, helping all who were in need, seeking and saving that which was lost so that He might inspire faith in Himself as the Redeemer and Savior as well as the Pattern for men. By faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Helper, men receive power to mould their lives after the life of Jesus; or rather they are born again into the new life which renews in them the image of God, lost through sin. “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God.”

Could He have inspired men to believe in Him as their Savior and Helper if He had not put on the garment of flesh and dwelt among them?

But there was at least one more important purpose of His coming into the flesh that called for accomplishment, and that was to prepare for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus could not always remain with men in the flesh, but He prepared the way for the Spirit of truth, who is with them both always and everywhere and in them.

He leads the believers into all truth, and comforts them in all the vicissitudes of this life, and develops in them the spirit and the character of Jesus Christ.

Why, then, did the Son of God lay aside His royal robes and don the humble garment of flesh with all its limitations, privations and sufferings, culminating in the terrible agony on the cross? Simply because that was the only way to reconcile and save us, His poor wayward, forlorn, despondent, terrified creatures whom He loved beyond measure.

Do we appreciate and reciprocate this wonderful love?

THE GOLDEN GIRDLE

"Girt about the breast with a golden girdle"

Since both the vision of the Revelator and the language in which it is related are evidently symbolical, it is proper to ask, What does the Golden Girdle symbolize?

It is not probable that Jesus ever wore a golden belt while in the flesh. Indeed, it is doubtful whether He ever possessed any gold whatever except that which the Wise Men gave to Him at His birth, and it is probable that that was all spent on the trip to Egypt. Therefore, we must look for some other meaning for this language.

If the garment which He wore symbolizes His human body, it is probable that the girdle which bound the garment to His person is legitimately taken to represent His human life. Life is certainly the girdle which binds the robe of flesh to the immortal spirit. When this girdle breaks, the robe falls to the earth and decays.

What a wonderful "something" life is! God put up a marvelous structure when He made the human body, and then He breathed into that wonderful organism the breath of life, and man became a living soul. What is that animating breath, without which even the most magnificent body speedily disintegrates into its native earth and ashes?

"When it leaps in the veins, when it beats in the heart,
When it thrills as it fills every animate part,
Where lurks it? how works it?.....we scarcely detect
it."

What life is we do not know, but that it *is* we do know, and we rejoice greatly in this knowledge. How sweet life is! What hardships we are willing to undergo to propagate it! How we value possessing it! How we fight to retain it! No wonder it is called the *golden* girdle. It is indeed the golden, the most precious, of man's temporal possessions.

And there was human life in the manger at Bethlehem. The life blood of the human race pulsated in the veins of the Christ-Child. Heavenly light chased away the darkness, and celestial music filled the air while the Son of God at His birth buckled on the Golden Girdle of human life. Words cannot measure the marvelous import of that event.

Given human life, what infinite possibilities lie before it! In one direction an Elysium of ecstatic joy and bliss, in the other an inferno of woe and anguish; on the one hand, delightful fields of beneficent activity, on the other, the wilds of passion, cruelty and degradation; here, the beautiful flowers of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance; there, avarice, envy, jealousy, hatred and murder. When a life begins, God alone knows where it will end.

Life is the greatest boon which our Heavenly

Father has conferred upon His children, but they are not all happy in its possession. It seems to be one of the laws of the universe that no gift can be conferred without a corresponding peril. A similar import have these other words, "Only he who cannot rise, cannot fall." When God gave life with all its possibilities for good, the possibilities for ill were also present, as there is always a valley or ravine between the mountains.

And the saddest fact of history is, that humanity has ever chosen the valley of ill rather than the mountain top of good. On that first Christmas, when the life which was to be the light of men began to beat in the breast of the Son of Man, humanity had reached the bottom of the slough of despond. The Prince of This World sat firmly upon the throne. His councilors were superstition, idolatry, debauchery, avarice and hatred. His banner, the black banner of death, floated from every rampart and masthead; and with great draughts of human blood, he slaked his thirst.

The monstrosity, which men had placed upon the throne of their lives, was selfishness, and he reigned supreme, an absolute and heartless tyrant. There was no hope of escape from this slavery until the Son of God girded up the loins of His robe of flesh with the golden girdle of human life and prepared to do battle with this terrible tyrant. Then it was that hope reentered the world. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works

of the devil." And we have a great multitude of witnesses who joyfully testify to the fact that our Champion is able to overcome in this terrific conflict.

How the coming of Jesus has added to the dignity and value of human life!

Heathen peoples have ever placed a very low valuation upon human life. Even Greece, which had reached the very pinnacle of heathen civilization, not only permitted infanticide, but such notable men as Aristotle and Plato commended the killing of weak and maimed children and the far-famed laws of Solon actually commanded it.

The reason for this low valuation of human life is that, without the possibilities for good that the coming of Christ has brought, life is essentially valueless; its outlook is hopeless; and the longer it is maintained, the deeper down into the slough of despond it leads. Why should it then be greatly valued?

But when Christ enters, hope for better things enters with Him, and not only hope but what men hope for, for He is indeed the Savior of men. When men are saved from sin, their lives become both genuinely enjoyable and richly fruitful. When it becomes evident, as it does in Christianized communities, that fruitfulness and bliss is a possibility for every human life, the preciousness of life becomes apparent and men hold on to it tenaciously. For this reason capital punishment has been abolished in many Christian communities.

How the golden girdle does adorn the person of the Son of God!

The song of the heavenly host which so stirred the shepherds of Bethlehem was probably inspired in part at least by the beauty of the Christ Child. How many of the characteristics that draw men to Him would be lacking, if He had never been cradled in Mary's arms! If He had never grown to manhood in the quiet village of Nazareth! If He had never, as a man, preached the Sermon on the Mount! If He had never gone about on earth, healing physical disease, instructing and comforting men! If He had never been nailed to the cross, nor conquered death in the grave, nor ascended triumphantly into heaven! The golden gleam of the belt was the reflection of the pure, white, intense, self-sacrificing love which caused the Son of God to renounce the glories and prerogatives of His position at the right hand of the Father and to enter the mean, humble, circumscribed sphere of human life so that He might be able to save the fallen sons of men from their miserable plight.

Oh beautiful Girdle of life! The whole earth is full of thy glory.

But, although His human life was very beautiful, the blessing this fact brought with it was even greater, for, by living the humble life of a peasant in a godlike manner, He became a blessing to all mankind. He made good the words of th angel who said, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto

you is born.....a Savior which is Christ the Lord." By means of His human life He has become the personal Savior of countless human beings. Indeed, even those who have rejected Him as a personal Savior, have shared in the benefits of His coming. There is scarcely a spot on earth which is not better for Christ having worn the Golden Girdle.

So His was a very fruitful life, and is a lesson for us! For, by the grace of God, ours is also the gift of human life, which we can use so as to incur the displeasure of God and good men and be a curse to ourselves and others; or, by the help of Christ, we may use it in such a way that it will make us attractive and a great blessing both to ourselves and to others. Shall we follow the fashion of using it selfishly as set by Adam or the fashion of self-sacrificing love set by Jesus Christ, the Prince of life?

However, Jesus delighted in His human life; He loved it; and He was very reluctant to lay it down.

The great Son of God was not ashamed to be a humble carpenter's son. He rather gloried in His humanity, for He continually referred to Himself as the Son of Man. What a beauty this lends to His character and what a dignity it gives to manhood! He was poor, He was rejected, He was despised by many, He was not considered a success in this world, He was hounded and persecuted by those in authority, and yet He was glad to be a man.

To be a man, a genuine man, a man of integrity and honor is the greatest thing in the world. (If there were anything higher and better, it would be to be a pure, true, faithful woman.) Even Christ the great Son of God was proud to be a true man. If you are a person of character, be not dismayed whatever your environments may be. Thank God for making you what you are. Look into the future without fear and trembling. And live your life under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit with joy and gladness. You have a right to rejoice in your humanity.

“What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin-grey an’ a’ that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine;
A man’s a man for a’ that:
For a’ that an’ a’ that,
Their tinsel show, and a’ that;
The honest man, though e’er sae poor,
Is king o’ men for a’ that.”

At various times a certain sentimentality and misdirected asceticism has laid hold upon particular words and phrases of Scripture and attempted to establish the theory that human life is intrinsically evil, and to be depised and hated. At such times, those who showed the greatest contempt for life and succeeded in most completely withdrawing from its obligations and privileges were considered most pious. Indeed, they were hailed by many as great saints. There are still those who love to sing about the “vale of tears” and to compare life with the Egyptian

bondage and the Babylonian captivity. These comparisons are admissible when applied to the life of a sinner, for a sinful life is essentially evil, but they are entirely out of place when applied to the human life of the redeemed, for, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Christ's attitude toward human life furnishes no ground whatever for such a false theory. He did not withdraw into a hermit's cell, nor did He avoid the duties and responsibilities of life. On the contrary, He went right into the thickest of life. He rejoiced with those who rejoiced and wept with those who wept. He avoided neither the rich nor the poor, the learned nor the ignorant, the healthy nor the diseased, the self-righteous nor the weak and fallen. He attended a wedding feast; He dined with a Pharisee; He lived with fishermen; He sat at meat with publicans and sinners; He laid His hand upon the leper; He took up the heavy burdens of life and bore them manfully, without even the suggestion of a complaint. His life on earth was full, rich, fruitful, pure and sweet. He did not hate nor despise life, but He loved it and was very reluctant to lay it down. Yea, His was the abundant life.

And let us not forget what He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The abundant life is for us and it is to be lived, in part at least, here on earth. Let us not think that it is virtu-

ous to hate and despise human life, God's greatest gift, just because many foolish people have misused it. The human life of a genuine Christian is not only not evil but it is the very best commodity which this world possesses. Consider the lives of Paul, and John, and Peter, and the other Apostles; and those of Savonarola, and John Huss, and Martin Luther, and Ulric Zwingli, and John Calvin, and John Knox, and John Wesley, and Charles Spurgeon, and Phillips Brooks, and Lyman Beecher, and Dwight L. Moody, and William Booth, and a multitude of others. We do not despise their lives. On the contrary we consider their lives to be as bright and shining lights, among the brightest in fact that this old world has ever seen. What is true of the lives of these men is true of every one who accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior and Guide. The human life of every true Christian is a Golden Girdle and it is to be worn with dignity, and joy, and gladness.

There is one more remark to be made about our Savior's regard for His human life. He valued it at its true worth, doubtless recognizing the fact that it is the most precious of man's possessions. But there were other things still more precious to Him. The doing of His Father's will was one of these. "Not my will but thine be done", he said as He lifted the cup of death to His lips and drained it to its bitter dregs. The salvation of His fellowmen was another thing

more precious to Him than life; that is why He allowed Himself to be nailed to the cruel cross to die.

He loved His Heavenly Father and His fellow-men more than He loved His life and that is just what made the girdle golden. Love inspired all His beautiful thoughts, His tender, wise and helpful words, His gracious kindly deeds, His perseverance, His use at times of the sharp two-edged sword of truth, and His divine self-sacrifice. In fact everything that made His life beautiful above the lives of other men was inspired by this divine sentiment.

And what is true of His life is true of the lives of His followers. Human life is exceedingly precious and valuable but it comes to its highest value only when it is dominated by genuine, pure, unselfish love. Then, and then only, is it a Golden Girdle.

HIS SNOW-WHITE HEAD AND HAIR

"His head and his hair were white as white wool, as white as snow"

The clear, sweet singer with a crown of snow
Not whiter than the thoughts below.—*Lowell.*

What is purer than the mind of Christ and what is whiter than His thoughts? Can we find a simpler and more natural interpretation of the part of Holy Scripture under consideration?

"Like thoughts whose very sweetness yielded proof
That they were born for immortality."

"Nay, in every epoch of the world, the great event, parent of all others, is it not the arrival of a great thinker?" asks Carlyle. If this is true of other epochs of the world's history, it is doubly true of the epoch which marks the beginning of the Christian era.

He who would construct a portrait of Jesus Christ must not fail to give close attention to His thought-life, for a man's mental activity reveals not only his intellectual life, but it also discloses the very essence of his character. "As a man thinketh....., so is he." Another has it, "Life is but thought." Therefore, let us look reverently upon His "snow-white head and hair" as the symbol of His thought-life.

Notice the whiteness and purity of His thoughts about God. What a striking contrast we notice

here between Him and men in general, all of whom have walked in the footsteps of mother Eve who began to doubt God even among the Elysian pleasures surrounding her in the Garden of Eden. Doubt springs eternal in the human breast. We question the wisdom of God in His creation, with reference to the circumstances with which He has surrounded us, in His moral government of the world. We are continually finding fault with Him, not indeed for making it possible for man to rise, but because He did not at the same time remove the possibility of falling. Why did he put the forbidden fruit in the garden? In other words, why didn't He make mountains without valleys, oceans without waves, winters without snow, sunshine without shadow? And why did He permit ugliness to be an accompaniment of beauty, evil of good, heaven of hell?

Doubting His wisdom as a guide and lawgiver, we choose our own paths, and disobey His laws. Then, when we fall into the pit of which He had warned us, we curse Him. We doubt His love because He does not prevent us from suffering the inevitable consequences of our own folly.

All these thoughts about God are dark, shading down with some people into jet black. How infinitely above these are Jesus' thoughts about God! Clouds of doubt seem never to have overshadowed His mind; on the other hand the sunlight of implicit childlike faith continually flooded His soul. He may not always have seen His way

clearly, and He certainly had great temptations, but He never doubted His Heavenly Father.

His first recorded expression, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" shows the confidence which He had in God even as a child, and the importance which He attached to His Father's business. If Christians would more generally think about God and His affairs as the Christ Youth did, there would be decidedly less indifference and lethargy, and more earnestness and zeal in the prosecution of the Lord's work. The church will never be right on this point until its members think right. As long as any and every other business is thought to be more important than the work of redeeming mankind by the power of the gospel, Christians will act as they think and betray their Master when the battle is hottest by the heinous sin of non-support.

Jesus never doubted God's wisdom, either in His creation of the world or in His moral government. He believed that God was wise enough to be His counselor and guide, so He continually sought His counsel. He communed with His Heavenly Father often and long. Indeed it is probable that most of the forty days and nights He spent in the temptation wilderness, whither He was driven by the Spirit, was spent in communion with God about the plan of salvation which He was to carry out. He thought that He must have the guidance of God in order to accomplish His purpose on earth, and that it was

incumbent upon Him to seek His guidance in prayer.

What do we think about prayer? We mean, what do we *really* think about it? Do we think that we need God's guidance in all the details of life and that it is our privilege to seek it in prayer?

Jesus never doubted God's wisdom as a law-giver. Indeed, He loved God's will; He fed upon it as His meat; it was to Him as a draft of pure sweet water to the thirsty traveler; and He obeyed it always. He defied His enemies to point out to Him a single breach of the Decalogue. He did not doubt the wisdom of His Father even when God allowed Him to be persecuted, hounded about, taken prisoner, mocked, spit upon, scourged and hung upon the cross as a common criminal. "Not my will but thine be done," was His word of confidence in the divine wisdom. How without question is His confidence in His Father's wisdom!

And, of course, His thought of God was never irreverent, as His constant desire was to honor and glorify Him. Therefore he taught His disciples to say when they prayed, "Our Father, who art in Heaven! Hallowed by Thy name." He also insisted that God's house should be kept sacred, therefore, when He found desecrators present there, He drove them out with a scourge.

And with regard to His work, that was dominated by the thought that He was a coworker with God. "My Father worketh hitherto; and

I work," He says. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son". His thought is that God is not separated from the world but that He is at work in it now, and that He makes use of those who love Him and are obedient to Him. This is a wonderful thought about God and it behooves us to think it after Him, for He desires that we should also be God's co-workers right here in this world. Listen to these words of His:

"The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

And, lastly, and above all, Jesus thought of God as His *Heavenly Father*, with all the deep tender meaning that the idea of fatherhood contains. The predominant element of this meaning is love, deep and broad and constant. God, the Father, is love. How constantly that blessed word, Father, was on Jesus' lips. The idea was doubtless never absent from His mind. It poured sweet incense into the crystal stream of thought about other great questions which flowed from that pure fountain. Of these living waters the nations of the earth have quaffed and as they drank they learned of the Fatherhood of God and its correlative, the Brotherhood of Man, the two most

powerful ideas in the world today. May their power increase until they dominate the world! Then hatred toward God and man shall cease, and wars and rumors of wars, military, industrial and moral, shall be no more.

Surely Christ's thoughts about God were without taint of doubt as to the great significance of God's purposes, God's wisdom, as to the reverence owed God, or with regard to God's fatherliness.

His thoughts were, however, not all with reference to God for His mind was occupied to some extent with "earthly" things. But here again we notice a great contrast between Him and other men. In His mental activities, "things" occupied but a minor place, while in most men's minds they occupy the center of the stage. How to acquire and hold wealth and all those things which can be procured with money is a subject which occupies the human mind almost constantly, often to the exclusion of higher and better thoughts. Paul's statement of the case, "The love of money is the root of all evil", is certainly true, especially when applied to social affairs. The inordinate desire to get things leads to lying, and stealing, and extortion, and oppression, and graft, and violence, and murder. Greed has been the cause of almost all the wars recorded in history. Avarice is the backbone of gambling, prize-fighting, the social evil and the liquor traffic. The plague spots of our civilization, the tenement and slum districts, are but the rotten fruits of the love of money. These things are as they are, not be-

cause material things are in themselves evil, but because man's thoughts about them are false, distorted, sordid, black.

Here Jesus' thinking was very discerning. He saw clearly that material things are necessary for men's physical well-being and are therefore valuable; but He did not lose sight of the fact that man is more than a beast, and therefore has important needs which cannot be met by food and raiment. This higher nature He considered to be very much more important than the lower animal nature, and therefore He placed relatively small values upon those things which could supply the needs of the body only. So we hear Him say:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

He does not undervalue the physical, but He places it where it belongs, subordinate to the moral and spiritual. He did not care for things beyond the necessities of His physical life, and therefore He paid very little attention to them, but devoted His time and energy almost exclusively to the promulgation of the moral and spiritual values of life.

How absurd for men to think infinitely more about ministering to that part of their nature

which links them to the animal than about that which links them to God! How blessed they would be, if men should learn to think of things as Jesus did, putting the mental, the moral and the spiritual first and the physical last. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven", first; then, "Give us this day our daily bread."

The stream of Jesus' discernment in the realm of values takes still another direction, that with regard to His fellow men. Let us go with His thinking here also.

The previous discussion has in a measure prepared us for this, for a man's attitude toward things will, in a large measure, determine his attitude toward his fellow men. If a man thinks that to gain possession of this world's goods is the chief end of life, he is inclined to look upon his fellows either as rivals, and therefore to be antagonized, or as those whom he may use in attaining his ends. In both cases he will endeavor to take advantage of men. This selfish attitude is the prolific source of injustice and wrong in the world. It is responsible for the fact that even to this day property rights are held superior to human rights.

Jesus did not have this distorted view of things. He looked upon His fellow men as those who had equal rights with Himself, and formulated the golden rule of justice thus: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

But He was discriminating in His evaluation of men. He did not estimate them above their true value. He recognized the fact that they were corrupted by sin, but He saw that they were capable of being saved from this corruption. He looked upon every man, woman, and child as one to whom He might be of some assistance, and He considered it both His duty and privilege to help them in every way possible; therefore He went about doing good both to the souls and bodies of men. The attitude of the essentially selfish individual is that of an exploiter of his fellow men. He appreciates them only if he can use them. He looks upon every man as his servant. Notice the diametrically contrary attitude of Jesus, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." He regarded Himself the servant of every one.

What a tremendous change would take place in the world, if men should have His regard for human values!

There were only two things which stirred Jesus to indignation, hypocrisy and the exploitation of the weak by the strong. "Woe unto you Pharisees, hypocrites! ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers." What would He have said to the exploiters of men today, the great watered-stock, tariff-protected concerns, which compel their laborers to work twelve hours a day seven days a week for a starvation wage; and in addition raise the prices of their com-

modities so high that they are well nigh prohibitive for the consumer; while some of the beneficiaries of this legalized system of extortion pose as great philanthropists, educators and promoters of peace among men?

And what would He have said to those who "corner" the necessities of life and destroy whole cargoes of foodstuffs to keep up the prices so that their bottomless coffers may be filled, while many of their fellow men are freezing and starving! And to the greedy and suspicious governments which burden their people with heavy taxes for the maintenance of great armies and navies and compel their sons to murder, or to be murdered by, their brothers across the border! "Woe unto you Pharisees, hypocrites!"

But Jesus knew that there was only one way to really serve one's fellow men, and that was by the eradication of the cause of all their trouble, sin, the root and essence of which is selfishness. "Ye must be born again," He said, and then proceeded to make regeneration of men possible by His own life, and death, and resurrection.

He thought of us as His brothers and sisters, children of His own Heavenly Father. He thought that men were worth loving and so He loved them even better than His life. He thought it not too great a sacrifice to lay down His life for them.

Yes, His thought-life is correctly described in these words: "His head and His hair were white as white wool, white as snow."

HIS WONDERFUL EYES

"And his eyes were as a flame of fire."

Manifestly His eyes of flesh are not referred to here except as they were instruments of the Spirit (or person) of Christ. Jesus had keen perceptive powers. Like a flame of fire were His eyes, penetrating and illuminating everything that came under His gaze!

He was able to look into the deep recesses of the hearts of men and explore the hidden chambers of their minds. His piercing glance could penetrate the strong armor of outward appearances and bring to light any evil motives skulking in the dark. Sometimes also He took a look ahead, His foreknowledge, like vivid flashes of lightning, illuminating for an instant the mysterious regions of the future, bringing to view marvelous changes which should yet take place in human affairs.

How readily He perceived the real motive of His enemies when they came to ask Him questions! How directly He penetrated to the state of the disciples' hearts, when they reasoned secretly among themselves as to who should be the greatest in the Kingdom! How quickly He discovered the real culprits in the case when the woman who had been taken in adultery was brought to Him! The Samaritan woman, whom

he met at Jacob's well, was astounded and brought to penitence and faith by the fact that her sinful past was known to Him. And the thief beside Him on Calvary received a place in Paradise, because, even during the agony of the cross, the lovelit eyes of Jesus were able to perceive the state of the penitent's heart. And when the risen Christ gave John messages to the Seven Churches, He continually repeated the words "I know." He knew all about them. His vision was not dulled to earthly things by His translation from the limitations of the flesh to the unfettered conditions in the presence of the Father. On the contrary, that piercing flame of His eyes has been burning ever since He walked upon this earth; and there is absolutely nothing hid from them. The Psalmist might well have spoken of Christ as he did of His Father:

"If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

But what is all this to me? Should I be concerned about the fact that the Supreme Mind of Him who is the judge of all the earth, enables Him to perceive the secret thought of my mind and the desires and motives of my heart, and to uncover the deeds which are known to no other mortal?

There are possibly some who contemplate this fact with entire equanimity, because their lives appear to them so exemplary that there is nothing in them which needs to shun the brightest

light. They find no fault with themselves; nor can they see how anyone else can. Indeed they are very much pleased with themselves and imagine that every one else, including God, is of the same mind. Yet it is probable that, if God should send His Son to ask for admittance, He would find the inn of their lives so overcrowded with self and selfish interests that He would have to be satisfied to find lodging in the stable of formal profession. Jesus describes one of these at His best, that is, while He is praying; and this is the prayer He puts upon His lips: "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." How filthy these rags of self-righteousness appear when placed beside the shining garments of the self-effacing, self-sacrificing, burden-bearing Jesus! What shortcomings the flaming eye of the Lord must have detected in this man blinded by His spiritual pride!

There are others who are not exercised by the fact that Christ's moral vision can penetrate to the depths of their beings, because they are too indifferent to its meaning to consider the matter seriously. Their minds and hearts are comparatively empty. They have no constantly dominant thoughts or emotions but simply drift with the tide. They live in the "twilight zone" of moral character—they are neither very bad nor very good. They are very indulgent with themselves and expect others to be still more so, espe-

cially God. What must be the emotion of such a person when the startling truth finally penetrates the hazy mists of his indolent mind, that the flaming eyes of the Son of God are turned upon him, bringing to light with startling vividness its dilapidated, disordered, irresolute, disgraceful condition! For with Him, "Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal." How can we justify ourselves in His sight if we demean ourselves toward life and its opportunities in Christ Jesus with slothful, contemptible indifference!

There is another class whose minds and hearts are not empty. They are full indeed to overflowing, but they have no desire for light in those well-filled chambers. These love the darkness better than the light, because their thoughts and emotions, as well as their deeds, are evil. The common criminal, the seducers of innocence, the white slave-driver, the shyster, the selfish politician, the political boss, the grafted, the briber, the profiteer, etc.—how these all love the dark shadows, the moonless nights, the well-guarded inner offices marked, *Private!* For such a genuine realization that "His eyes are as a flame of fire," which illuminate all the dark places and bring all that is hidden to a light that is brighter than day, must be indeed terrible. "And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, Fall on us."

But there is yet another class to be considered. They do not dread having Christ look into their lives. It is not consciousness of any perfection

of their own, that causes the absence of such dread, for they are exceedingly conscious of personal shortcomings. But they have detected love and sympathy in those eyes as well as light. They remember that He gave His precious life on Calvary for the express purpose of saving just such sinners as they feel themselves to be. They hear Him say, "I came to seek and to save that which is lost," and they take Him at His word. They know what it means to be lost in the darkness of sin and folly. They know what it means to wander about in the trackless wilderness of time—lost. They know what it means to stand at bay in deadly battle with ravenous wolves in whose howls they have heard the foredoom of eternal damnation,—the wolves of lust and passion and avarice and hatred and remorse. But they remember also that when the night was darkest, when the wilderness was most trackless, when the howl of the wolves was fiercest, when indeed their fate seemed sealed, suddenly the flaming eyes of the Savior flooded the landscape with light; then their enemies betook themselves to cover and the way of life became plain and straight. What gladness the remembrance of those saving eyes brings to their happy hearts!

They have learned to know Him as their best friend, and they are glad that He understands them thoroughly. Have they a need, He knows all about it and will surely supply it. Have they a thorn in the flesh, He knows all about it and His grace is sufficient for them. Have they faults,

He reveals them by the Holy Spirit and helps to correct them. What a comfort it is to have a friend who really understands us! Our neighbors may ascribe false motives to us; our brethren in the church may misjudge us; even those in our own household may fail to understand us, but our Savior knows us. He knows our mind, though it sometimes is hesitant; He knows our faith, though it be ever so weak and faltering; He knows our love, though it may be hidden from others; and He knows how, even while most conscious of our great weakness and imperfection, we desire to be like Him.

We should not want to hide anything from Him. We should be desirous that He see everything, for we know that He alone can help us to get rid of that which is hurtful, and to develop that which is good; and so we pray with the Psalmist, remembering that our Savior and His Father are one, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

And how precious it is to know that, when amidst the fragrant odors of fresh flowers which loving hands have laid upon our bier, this tenement of clay is gently laid to rest on the quiet western slope of the sunlit autumnal hillside, our spirit shall mount to the throne of the Shining One, who knows us through and through. Our loving judge, He to whom we must give an account of the deeds done in the body, knows all

about us. He knows all about our heritage, our environments, our weaknesses, our longings, our strivings. Blessed be those eyes, from which nothing is hidden.

But Jesus was not only able to discern the present; He was able to see through the veil of the future as well. He clearly foresaw the destruction of Jerusalem and the final rejection and dispersion of His people in 70 A. D., so graphically described by Josephus. He not only foresaw this event but also perceived its underlying cause. The people of promise had passed through innumerable vicissitudes, jealously guarded by the Invisible Power until the hour of their visitation should come. And now the hour had come! The Son of Man, the Messiah, stands upon the Mount of Olives. But, alas! His people know not the hour of their visitation; they reject their Savior. And Jesus weeps, as He sees the great hand which has been held over them in protection so long, silently withdrawn, and realizes that their doom is sealed.

But this event of the passing of the Jewish nation although of great significance, is but an incident in the great world movements which He foresaw. The really significant event to Jesus was not the passing of a nation, or any number of nations. It was the passing of the power of the Prince of Darkness. At a time when this potentate sat upon the throne of this world and ruled with almost undisputed sway, Jesus saw him fall as lightning from heaven. "Now shall

the prince of this world be cast out," He declared.

These are very significant words.

How often we hear expressions such as these: Men have always gambled and they always will no matter how sorry they are afterward; the social evil has always existed and always will, laws or no laws; men always drank liquor and they always will, and the more it is prohibited the more they will drink; the rich have always oppressed the poor and they always will, whether the poor kick about it or not. This, in other words, is saying that Christ's words are not true. "The Devil has always reigned and he always will, no matter what Christ and Christians may do about it." The sad thing about it is, that these statements are made by thousands who call themselves Christians. They even go so far as to ridicule those who disagree with them, calling them "visionaries" and "reform cranks," who insist that Christ's words mean what they say, that Satanic conditions must go.

One reason for this strange phenomenon is that, after almost two thousand years of warfare, Satan is still so powerful that men of little faith cannot see how he can ever be dislodged. And yet they profess to believe in an omnipotent Christ who came to destroy the works of the devil. How limited is their vision! They are more impressed with the power of the devil than they are with that of our Great Commander. The strange thing is that they should pride them-

selves in their lack of faith in the power of the One whom they profess to serve.

But is there any evidence that Christ's vision is being fulfilled?

It is very probable that many conversations similar to the following took place in Rome several hundred years A. D.

"Say, brother," said one Christian to another, "these gladiatorial contests are terribly brutal affairs. Don't you think that we Christians ought to try to have them prohibited?"

"You are certainly beside yourself to even suggest such a thing," replied the other. "Your zeal has made you mad. Rome has always had these bloody affairs and she always will. We should only make ourselves ludicrous or endanger our own lives by attempting such a foolish thing."

"These contests are contrary to the spirit of Christ and I'm going to protest against them and try to stop them no matter how foolish it may seem," answered the first speaker.

And he and other believers in Christ proceeded to dethrone this Satan of brutality, and history records the success of their seemingly impossible undertaking.

Once upon a time, after many long hard years of oppression, men began to sigh for civil liberty. No one dared openly to speak out his longings, but one, bolder than the rest, crept up to his fellow and cautiously whispered into his ear. And this is what he said:

"This tyranny is becoming unbearable. Let us organize and make a break for liberty. Why should these tyrants rule over us? Are we not God's sons, brothers of our Lord Jesus Christ? Why should we not be free?"

But his fellow answered gloomily, "You fool! Be careful what you say. There are spies all about us. And, besides, your words are nonsense. The world has always been ruled by tyrants and always will be. Nothing but absolute monarchy can maintain itself."

But we of the twentieth century know better. The Satan of absolutism in government has been cast out and he will never ascend his throne again.

At the time of Christ, the Satan of chattel slavery sat so firmly upon his throne that no one but Christ even dreamed that he could ever be dislodged. It took almost two thousand years of continuous warfare to conquer this monster, but he finally had to abdicate. The old tyrant had entrenched himself in our own fair Southland for his last great stand. It took a great war and thousands of human lives to lay him low. He fought with desperation to the last ditch, but he was finally slain and chattel slavery has passed from the face of the earth.

During the long centuries while Satan continued to reign, after Christ had seen and described his fall, how many thousands of weak-kneed Christians, do you think, aided and abetted the enemy, and dishonored their Savior and His

words by saying, "There has always been slavery in the world and there always will be."

In this category we might also mention the Satan who is just now being forced to abdicate his throne, the Satan of the unjust and unfair treatment of women. Every attempt to put them on a level with men has been met with the objection that women always were treated that way and always will be. Happily woman herself is doing not a little to destroy this ancient lie.

That old lie which the Devil has persuaded even some of the very elect to repeat for him, that because an evil has long existed it will always continue to exist, has done perhaps more damage than any other which his Satanic majesty has ever concocted. It should certainly never fall from the lips of a Christian. The followers of the Christ who saw "Satan fall as lightning from heaven," have no right to say that anything that belongs to Satan's kingdom will continue to exist. On the contrary, it is their duty to declare persistently that all wrongs must cease, no matter how powerful and well intrenched they may be. They must all finally yield to the irresistible pressure of a truly Christian civilization.

The Satan whom Christ saw falling from heaven still has possession of a large portion of his former domain, but this also shall and will be wrested from his thieving hand. In the meantime, it is our duty and privilege to strengthen the hearts of men by proclaiming the fact that when our Master, whose eyes are as a flame of

fire, looked into the future He saw that the Prince of This World should be cast out. He, into whose hand has been given all power in heaven and on earth, came to destroy the works of the Devil, and He was able to see the time when this task should be accomplished.

HIS BRILLIANT FEET

"His feet like unto burnished brass"

If there is anything more brilliant and lustrous than burnished brass when it reflects the sunlight, it is the feet, the walk, the earthly life of Jesus, which reflects the glory of heaven. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness."

Let us pray that the Lord may open our eyes to see the Lord God Himself walking among sinful men in those luminous feet of Jesus. The natural man, even the most enlightened, is in the class with Philip, who, after having observed the Master at close range for three years, said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." For such Jesus still has no other answer than He gave to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, show us the Father?" Oh, how few really see the Father reflected in the Son, in His divine life upon earth, in "His feet like unto burnished brass!"

If your eyes are still blinded by the tinsel of worldly things, we admonish you to turn to the Holy Spirit to enlighten you, so that you may accompany us, as we walk beside our Master and look upon His feet, which appear as burnished brass reflecting the light of God's countenance.

"I counsel thee," says the Lord, "to.....anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Let us look reverently upon His shining feet as they press this old sin cursed earth, leaving ineffaceable tracks upon the pathways of time!

Of the toddling footsteps which gladdened His fond mother's heart during the days of His early childhood, we know nothing, but how significant it is that the first steps of which we have a record lead straight to the House of God! Nor did they hasten back; they fondly lingered there, for He loved His Father's house.

Golden indeed are the steps which lead a boy to the House of God. Happy the boy who sees the house of his Heavenly Father in the church building. How "brilliant" to the fond parents are the feet of their boy, when he voluntarily steps forward in the sanctuary, and reverently bows at the altar, worshipping his Lord. Many parents would be transported into the third heaven by such a sight. What a light that episode which took place in Jerusalem, when He was but twelve years old, sheds upon the childhood of Jesus! Even then He was intensely interested in the greatest business in the world, His Father's business. Nothing else in a boy's life so certainly foreshadows genuine greatness as a sincere wholehearted interest in the things of God.

But even Jesus was not allowed to remain in the Temple. Reluctantly enough He departed from that sacred place, to accompany His parents

back to Nazareth, where He was subject unto them. Beautiful are the feet of those children, who run hither and thither on errands of love and usefulness at the behest of their parents. Although Jesus was wiser than most children, and probably knew much more about many things than His parents did, yet He never questioned their authority, but did their bidding without murmur or complaint; nor did He want to be free from their control. He remained with them until He was thirty years of age. Many errands of love His agile feet must have run for His mother during those years! Often they must have sprung to the assistance of Joseph! "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

Any child or youth who emulates Jesus by honoring his parents will certainly also continually increase in favor both with God and man. We instinctively respect and delight in the youth who honors his parents, but we dislike the disobedient child. This defect of disobedience, a defect which so manifestly unfits a child for life, is chargeable in most cases to the parents who did not have the wisdom and the purpose to exact obedience from their children. It really constitutes one of the greatest wrongs which parents can inflict upon their children. Jesus was very fortunate in the parents to whose care God entrusted His early life. Even from His first footsteps, He walked upon the shining pathway of obedience to them. This path later very naturally broadened

out into the still more beautiful pathway of obedience to His Heavenly Father, in which He walked all His earthly life. This latter path lead Him, indeed by way of Gethsemane and Calvary, to the Throne of Glory where He now sits, The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He who most humbly walks upon the rough steep pathway of obedience is best qualified to rule. Judged by this standard, Christ is certainly the greatest of all rulers and most deserving of obedience from us.

After a blank in the Scriptural record covering eighteen years of His life, we again come across His footprints on the records of history. He again leaves His home at Nazareth, but, this time, His feet carry Him, not to the house of God built by the hand of man, but to that greater temple which was constructed by the Almighty Himself, the Temple whose blue dome reaches to the vaulted sky, and in whose vast courts the songsters of the forest render sweet music, accompanied by harps æolian, where also occasionally the voice of thunder is heard as the forked lightning illuminates its dark recesses. The prophet and priest, then in charge of the sacred rites of this temple, was a child of the wilderness. The Altar was situated on the banks of the historic Jordan. But let us allow the sacred writer to tell the story.

“And John was clothed with camel’s hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, There cometh after me

he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

"I baptize you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

"And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.

"And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the spirit as a dove descending upon him; and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."

What does this trip to the Jordan mean? Why should He, who knew no sin, be baptized with a baptism which was evidently for sinners?

A thoughtful analysis of this incident gives us a glimpse of the divine-human nature of His character. The baptism of Jesus was an act of identification, consecration and introduction.

He was without sin and its consequences, but by allowing Himself to be baptized with this baptism, He identified Himself with sinful humanity, and thus became a sharer in the wages of their sin. The sinless one becomes *as* a sinner in order to be able to get under the sinner's burden. "Behold the Lamb of God, which beareth the sin of the world."

By this act He also consecrated Himself to the task of which baptism is but a symbol, the cleansing of the individual from sin. He is thus dedicated to His special life work, the work of saving sinners. The unselfishness of this act becomes apparent, when we remember that the work to which He thus consecrated Himself was to be entirely for others.

The other fact yet to be noticed is that by the act of baptism and that which transpired in connection therewith, Christ was introduced to the one who was to introduce Him to the world. These are the words of the Baptist: "I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

In connection with that journey to the Jordan, the Son of God identified Himself with us sinful mortals; He got under the burden which was dragging us down to perdition, and was "introduced" to us, as the One in whom to believe is to be saved.

From the Jordan we trace His footsteps into another part of the great temple of nature, the temptation wilderness. Since it was the Spirit who came upon Him at the time of His consecration and who led Him thither, it is obvious that this episode was to have a direct bearing upon His life task. He was doubtless led into the solitude of the wilderness that He might meditate upon the proper method to be pursued for the accomplishing of His great work. During those forty days of intense meditation and prayer the destiny of the world hung in the balance. Satan also knew the strategic importance of those days, and therefore came to the attack with all his acumen and skill. He knew that he could not turn

Christ from His *purpose* to save mankind, but he hoped to persuade our Lord to adopt a method which would insure his defeat.

Taking occasion of the immediate physical needs of Jesus, who had doubtless been so absorbed in His meditation as to forget all about His bodily wants, he suggested that Jesus use His power to transform inanimate objects into food. The obvious suggestion is that our Lord should attempt to save the world by bettering the temporal condition of mankind. This, by the way, is the plan of salvation which many of our socialist brethren have adopted. Jesus was not misled. He stated a truth which it would be well for all social reformers to heed, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Important as is the "bread problem", if you save that part of man only which lives by bread, you haven't saved much of him.

The next suggestion of Satan was that Jesus should win His following in the world by becoming a miracle worker. If He should cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple in the sight of all Jerusalem and not be hurt, His fame as a miracle worker would certainly spread very rapidly throughout the world. But Satan also failed in this attempt. How sad that he succeeds with many today who profess to represent Christ, but work for personal popularity rather than for the salvation of men!

The third suggestion was that Jesus form an alliance with Satan, go into "politics" and gain possession of the governmental powers of the

world. The intimation was that, should He possess Himself of supreme temporal power, He could save the world by compelling men to be good by force of arms. Jesus saw both the blasphemy and the futility of this plan, therefore He indignantly rejected it. Satan now left Jesus for a season, but he returned to virtually the same combat in later years, in the representatives of the Church, when he succeeded in persuading the Popes of Rome to adopt this very plan. The result was that Christianity was well nigh blotted out. And this was the real cause of the "Dark Ages."

But let us notice that now, after this experience, He is ready for His life-work. What plans had He adopted? We are not told, in so many words, but these we can learn by observing His work.

First: He tried to create hope in the hearts of the weary, despairing, law-ridden multitude. He begins by announcing that the "Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." His Sermon on the Mount opens with the beatitudes, a veritable galaxy of causes for rejoicing. He discovers many great blessings where no one had ever suspected their presence before. On another occasion He used these hope inspiring words: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." His was a message of hope, especially for the downtrodden and outcast, those who felt the heavy burden of sin and of life.

Next, He began to manifest the spirit which

must be dominant in the new kingdom, the spirit of love and helpfulness. He healed the sick, He restored the cripples, He unstopped the ears of the deaf, opened the mouths of the dumb and the eyes of the blind, and for the sake of the living, He raised up the dead. He rejoiced with those who rejoiced, and wept with those who wept, usually, however, turning their weeping into joy. Genuine unselfish love toward His fellow men was manifested in all that He did and said.

But He saw clearly that mankind cannot be saved through the relief of their physical needs alone or mainly while the enemy both of soul and body is allowed to continue his work of devastation; therefore He came out boldly and uncompromisingly against the fundamental source of all trouble, sin. So with "Repent ye," did He begin His public ministry. Instead of forming a league with Satan, He boldly attacked Him. As John later stated it, He had come to destroy the works of the Devil. He set His face as a flint against sin, in order to save the sinner. His plan was to save the people not *in* their sins but *from* their sins. Sin being the thing that mainly ruins men, therefore that is the thing they mainly need to be saved from. His uncompromising opposition to evil, and especially His scathing denunciation of those evildoers, who not only persisted in their wickedness but attempted to hide behind a sanctimonious cloak of formal piety, soon gained Him the hatred of the hypocritical religious leaders of the day, and led finally to His execution.

However, the essence of His plan of salvation lay in the nature of the remedy which He offered. He mentioned this remedy to Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again." Not temporal betterment, not governmental improvement, not intellectual development, not moral reformation, but regeneration, a new birth of the individual.

What a strange new doctrine was this to most men of that day! "How can a man be born when he is old?" "How can these things be?"—men have asked these questions thousands of times since Nicodemus first put them. They have demonstrated (?) again and again the impossibility of the new birth. They have ridiculed and laughed this doctrine "out of court"; but the fact remains that if there is to be genuine salvation from sin, if there is to be genuine moral improvement, if there is to be genuine advancement in civilization, if the Kingdom of God is to come on earth,—"Ye must be born again." Christ's plan of salvation is to transform sinners into children of God, and the glorious thing about this plan is that, all the doubters notwithstanding, it works, it actually works. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Oh, what a great host of twice-born men and women have graced the earth with their presence since the coming of our Savior! And who can deny that they have been the salt of the

earth? All the great and wonderful transformations which Christianity has accomplished in the world have been due to countless men experiencing individually this change of heart.

THE FURNACE

“As if it had been refined in a furnace”

The refining furnace which gave to our Savior's feet their transcendent luster was evidently this world, in which the fire of sin and the holocausts it enkindles are raging. “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Shall we take notice of some of the “fuel” used in this furnace?

As a baby, He was cradled in a manger; when grown to manhood, He had no home of His own; when departing from this life, He had no means to provide for His mother; and when death had relieved the agony of the cross, He was laid away in a borrowed grave. Extreme poverty was certainly our Savior's lot while here on earth, the poverty that pinches and causes suffering.

Poets have sung of the good fortune of the boy who is born without the encumbrance of wealth. In fact, the moderately poor have some advantages which the wealthy do not possess, and are exempt from many of their temptations. But there is a line beyond which poverty does not lend itself well to poetic fancy. When a family cannot command sufficient of this world's goods

to supply their actual needs, it is a poor family and its poverty is certainly rather a curse than a blessing. If the mother knows that her child needs milk and she is compelled to give it water instead, because she cannot afford milk, there is suffering, both in the child's body and in the mother's heart. When a father who well knows that his boy, the idol of his heart, should continue in school, in order to fit himself properly for life, is compelled by stress of poverty to set that boy to work prematurely and thus blight his future, there is deep sorrow in the father's heart and possible inefficiency on the way for the boy. When virtuous girls are virtually driven by the sharp sword of hunger and privation into a life of shame, then poverty is hell. And when gaunt, hollow-eyed poverty sits by the bedside of the stricken father and attempts to comfort the dying one with the assurance that "charity" will take care of his wife and little ones, how that father must hate his would-be comforter. Faith in the Father of the fatherless is the only thing that can comfort a man in such a desperate situation.

Be not deceived by the effusions of poetic souls and by the fact that many have been victorious in their battle with the howling wolf. Poverty is not a blessing, it is an evil, a great evil. It is a flame that burns fiercely hot in the furnace of life. And our Savior felt the heat thereof.

Is poverty a "necessary evil"? This question has almost always been answered in the affirma-

tive, because of the well-nigh universal prevalence of poverty. It has been assumed that Jesus also took this side of the question when he said, "The poor ye have always with you." This is not the case, however. These words refer to an existing condition, but they do not imply that that condition must always continue. The fact of the matter is, that the principles taught by Jesus Christ, when put into practice, result in the reduction of poverty. If Christianity should ever become thoroughly dominant, poverty would necessarily cease altogether. It has only two real causes, namely, the inequitable distribution of material things, and wastefulness on the part of their users. In the former case, greed, the love of money, the root of most of the social evil, is responsible; in the latter it is sinful indulgence. It was the well defined purpose of Christ to destroy these works of the Devil in the individual; to cast out the demons of greed and self-indulgence. Jesus did not do much to alleviate the results of such poverty, but He did fight its causes with all His strength. He was the best friend the poor man ever had. He walked through the flaming fire of poverty so that He might be able to save thousands of His fellowmen from the heat thereof. I dare say, that at the present time, there are millions of people living in comparative prosperity who, but for the coming of Jesus and His sharing of the lot of the poor, would be living either in slavery or in pinching poverty. Although there is still much to be done along this

line, what has already been accomplished certainly shows that Jesus did not go this road in vain.

But, after all, poverty was only the kindling wood in the furnace. The heat grew more intense as other experiences came into His life. The startled tyrant Herod, the usurper, was the first to add fuel to the flame, which he did in becoming jealous toward Jesus. To save the young child from destruction, His parents were compelled to flee to Egypt. So it happened that He first learned to walk, not upon the sacred soil of His fatherland, but upon the hot sands of the ancient land of bondage. Born in poverty and forced into exile when still a babe in His mother's arms, how very early in life He felt the heat.

We have no record of the hardships of the journey to Egypt, the stay in exile, the return journey, nor of the life in Nazareth; but it is exceedingly probable that these early childhood experiences were continued during that entire period. At any rate, when He emerges from this obscurity, He is still very poor. And the jealousy which first burned in the heart of Herod, soon flamed forth from the hearts of the leaders of the Jews. It very soon developed into deadly hatred which manifested itself in calumny and cowardly but persistent persecution. Fuel was continually added to this flame. The populace turned from their old leaders to the one who had a new message of hope and wrought many deeds of love. To counteract Jesus' popularity, His enemies

boldly proclaimed that He performed His miracles by the help of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. He countered by showing the absurdity of their contention and then intimated that they had committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, by ascribing that to the Devil which they knew to be the work of God.

Finally, right in the suburbs of Jerusalem, where all men might ascertain the facts, Jesus performed one of the greatest and most remarkable of all His miracles, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. This miracle only deepened the jealous hatred of His enemies, resulting in their determination to put Him to death.

But this was not all. The avarice and greed of men, that which had probably reduced His family to poverty, resulted in something more than poverty for Him. The entire trend of His teaching was against, not only the unjust, but the disproportionate possession of wealth. Not only did His teachings have a tendency to stir up the hatred of the avaricious, but twice He dared actually to interrupt some of them in their greedy occupation by driving them out of the Temple.

So does the greedy capitalist of today hate the man who dares to interfere with his business! The fact that the reformer is fighting for the down-trodden and oppressed, with the most unselfish and benevolent of motives, makes this hatred all the more intense, because it exposes, by contrast, the nefarious and dastardly character of the spoiler. This deadly hatred Jesus had

incurred. This class probably furnished the money necessary to hire the detectives who, towards the end of His public ministry, dogged our Saviour's every step; and the greater amount necessary to hire the mob which was trained to cry, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' at the psychological moment.

The world is still very inhospitable towards, and it burns, any one who in the spirit of Christ dares to raise his voice against capitalized greed. If Christ were here today, how the oppressors of the poor would denounce Him as a dangerous demagogue, and how Mr. Big Business would spit upon Him and spurn Him, while sitting in some gilded temple, thanking God that he is not as other men are. And how easy it would be to gather a huge fund among these interests to fight Him and His purposes. He would be fought with the hired press, the political machine, the bribed legislator and judge, by cut-throats and assassins.

O yes! This fire still rages around Christ and all those who are really fighting under His banner. The apostles of organized greed are fighting His cause with every available means!

But there were still other experiences of the same kind for Christ, for in addition to poverty and relentless persecuting hatred, inspired by jealousy and greed, there was also death, the humiliating and excruciating death on the cross, inflicted only on the vilest of criminals.

He had withdrawn from the heat for a brief breathing spell, but in the Garden of Gethsemane

He stood again before the door of this terrible burning, which had now been heated "seven times hotter" than before. Should He enter it? He had seen the white flame in the eyes of His enemies; He had heard the fierce hiss of its heat in the words of their mouths during the last few days. Should He surrender Himself into the hands of these inhuman creatures, and be cast into that murderous flame? His enemies are coming; they are coming soon; He knows it; and He is alone.

But did not also His disciples know about what He was passing through? Yes, they did, and had been terrified by what they felt coming, and they had warned Him and admonished Him to avoid it, although it is certain they did not think He had to endure it. They realized the danger but they did not know that it was necessary for Him to walk into the jaws of hell in order to snatch mankind as "a brand from the burning"; so they slept, even when the crisis had come, when the fate of the world hung in the balance, when the hour of final decision was upon Him. He fell upon His face and His body bent and writhed in the terrific struggle until great drops of red moisture oozed from His pores. Finally the Savior conquered the man in Him, and He was ready to be offered up for the salvation of mankind; for your salvation and mine.

Gethsemane reveals the greatness of the self-sacrifice of Jesus, because it reveals the fact that He knew what would have to be endured, and,

knowing the terribleness of the agony through which He must pass, He yet voluntarily walked into the mouth of hell. And what for? To save you and me, for we were doomed to eternal perdition and He was the only one who could save us, and He could save us only as He died for us, taking our place.

Immediately there is heard the tread of men and the clanking of the instruments of attack. The disciples are all awake now.

Out of the night comes Judas, leading the guard.

Ah, Avarice, thy accursed power has broken even the Master's inner circle of followers. Oh, the power of money for evil! Who is safe from its clutching, throttling, conscience-stifling grasp! Judas had been tempted by the slushfund and it made him betray His Master with the sign of affection, a method still in vogue. When a public official has betrayed his constituency for gain, he usually tries to hide the fact by gaining for them some unimportant but spectacular benefit. But we are really putting an undeserved blemish on the name of Judas when we class him with these men. He brought back the money and hung himself with remorse when he discovered that he had betrayed innocent blood; but who ever heard of a venal congressman bringing back his 'swag', or an alderman casting down the dirty pieces of silver at the feet of the 'Higher up', or of a police official restoring his hush money? On the contrary these modern betrayers climb upon a

pedestal and expect the people whom they have betrayed to worship them as protectors, benefactors, heroes.

But let us return from our digression. Jesus was apprehended, dragged from one court to another, slandered, mocked, spit upon, crowned with thorns, scourged and finally nailed to a rude cross, where He was left to die a slow torturing death. His enemies mocked and scoffed at Him with ghoulish glee, but "as a lamb that is led to the slaughter is dumb so He openeth not His mouth." Like unto the three Hebrew children, He is walking in the fiery furnace, but as we look we see that He is not being consumed but that the process of refining is in progress, for He is becoming "like unto burnished brass; as if it had been refined in a furnace."

How He did love us and how we ought to love Him in return! Are we making sacrifices for Him who sacrificed His life for us?

Alas! and did my Savior bleed,
And did my Sovereign die!
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

Was it for crimes that I have done,
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ, the mighty maker, died
For man the creature's sin.

THE PATMOS PORTRAIT

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do!

HIS MANY-TONED VOICE

"His voice as the sound of many waters"

When the Revelator likens our Savior's voice to "the sound of many waters," the word "many" indicates that the reference is not to a great mass of water, but to water in its various and multitudinous sounds and activities.

What a fitting simile this is! How manifold is the voice of water! The thunderous boom of the wild storm-lashed surf! The awesome roar of the great waterfall! The raging rush of the cataract! The swish and swirl of the great river! The melodious babble of the sunny brook! The gentle patter of rain! What an unlimited variety of voices! What a wealth of tone!

To all that the voice of our Master is properly compared.

It is important that we listen attentively to this wonderful voice, that we may heed the admonition which comes to us directly from the Father, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

As it would be impossible for us to distinguish all of the various sounds which water produces, so it will be impossible for us to indicate the whole range in the voice of Christ, but in the great harmony of His manifold voice there are certain major chords which we here wish to identify.

Perhaps the most arresting of these is the deep-toned thunder of authority. "And they were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

As He entered the Temple Court one day, bent on worship, His devotion was rudely disturbed by the shrill cry of hucksters and the garrulous gabble of moneychangers who had invaded these sacred precincts. He doubtless knew that these profaners of the House of God had purchased this indulgence from the family of the High Priest at a great price and that it was exceedingly dangerous to interfere with the income of this powerful family; yet He acted and spoke with the authority of the Son of Him whose house was being profaned; for He "cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves; and He said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye make it a den of robbers."

Turning for a moment to the more practical here, is my body, which is also God's temple, so clean that He does not need to hesitate when He would enter?

Again we hear His authoritative voice as He stands upon the deck of a small ship, violently tossed about by the angry waves of the Sea of Galilee. The disciples, being sore afraid, had awakened Him, "and He arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace be still, and the wind ceased and there was a great calm.....

And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

Why need we then fear the storms of life when this powerful Savior has said, "Lo, I am with you always?"

Again we hear the note of His authority on a Sabbath day in a synagogue at Capernaum. "In the synagogue was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil; and he cried with a loud voice, Ah, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the Holy one of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no hurt."

Shall I remain in bondage to an unclean devil of habit or passion, when one word from my great Master can drive him out of my life?

But listen again! This time his voice is so potent that it opens the grave and awakens the dead. One of His dearest friends is dead. The grave swallowed him up four days since. His sisters stand weeping. The Master's head is bowed. An unearthly groan escapes Him. But presently He speaks with the authority of the Prince of Life whom even death must obey: "Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth."

Must I then live in continual fear of Death, when I am serving the Prince of Life, whose word

compels even this great enemy of mankind to flee away?

Let us listen to Him speaking once more, not now to malefactors, nor to turbulent waves, nor to violent demons, nor yet to the dead. He is speaking to the living, to you and to me, His disciples, for His words, on this occasion, come reverberating down the corridor of the ages with unusual authority. These are the momentous words which He utters, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

If malefactors and winds and demons and death obeyed Him, shall not we, who have been saved by His life and His death upon the cross?

But these limited observations on this part of our subject must suffice, as there are other cadences of His voice which also claim our attention.

We are next attracted by the swish and swirl of the great river of truth which flowed from His lips. The commerce of the world's enlightenment and advancing civilization is borne upon the bosom of this majestic stream.

Men may be quickened into newness of life, born into the realm of spiritual verities so that they are able to perceive and appreciate the truth, born into that condition in which one is really alive. How abundantly this great truth. "Ye must be born again," has fructified and enriched human life.

"Ye are the light of the world," is another of the great truths He spoke. In other words, real

enlightenment comes to the world through the experiences of living men, not only concerning things spiritual but also things material. In comparatively modern times men, realizing the force of this truth, began to perceive that the only way to increase our knowledge is by increasing our experience; so they began to experiment. Thus modern science was born. It came into the modern world with a rush and many who had not been living near the river of Christ's truth, have failed to recognize the fact that it is but a part of that whole great stream.

Another of the truths Jesus taught is that the spiritual and moral are to be prized above the material; indeed, that material prosperity is dependent upon a proper evaluation of the spiritual and moral. The words in question here are: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." History conclusively proves this great assertion to be true. The adoption of genuine Christianity by groups of individuals and nations, that is, a real striving after the things of God and righteousness, has always been succeeded by a wave of unusual material prosperity. Yet the value of things material looms so large for the moment that we are apt to forget the great truth that it is only collateral and should never be made the chief issue of life. We are continually chasing the rainbow of material prosperity, hoping to find the pot of gold of happiness at its

base, when that gold can be found only as the field of spiritual endeavor is cultivated.

We also learn of the value of the individual human soul listening to Jesus Christ: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul!" This estimate of the value of the individual soul has been the most potent factor in the development of genuine democracy, the development of individual responsibility in morals, and the development of character. It places the emphasis upon the quality of individual lives rather than upon the concomitants of life.

So we might continue almost indefinitely to name great truths Jesus spoke which as they are practiced are ensuring the world's progress. Suffice it however to call attention to the fact that the sound thereof is the sound of a stream, deep, wide, irresistible.

We are also familiar with the merry laughter of the babbling brooklet as it cheerfully winds its way through mysterious woodlands, blossoming meadows and waving fields, toward the great river and the greater ocean. The burden of its song is faith and hope, and its oft-repeated refrain is, "There are greater and better things ahead."

In the midst of His great labors, Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye shall do greater things than these." And again He said, while the Prince of This World was still at the zenith of his power, "I saw the devil fall as an angel from heaven."

What a wonderful glimpse of future victory that was! Listen again! "The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all people." We hear it again in the dark forest of apparent separation, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." "I will not leave you comfortless." "In my father's house are many mansions.....Where I am there shall ye be also."

How many millions of faithful Christians have been cheered by these words of faith and hope! They have been encouraged by them when the battle of life waxed sore; strengthened by them when the tempests of adversity grew wild and fierce; sustained by them when the burdens were almost unbearable. They have been inspired by them to their highest endeavor, and they have been their comfort and stay in their darkest hours of sorrow.

But there is another sound of water to be mentioned here, and that is the sound of rain, roaring, pouring rain; dashing, slashing rain; drizzly, grizzly rain; and the gentle pitter-patter of the rain which falls as a benediction "from heaven above upon the place beneath."

These sounds are as voices speaking to the attentive listener of rivulets, and brooks, and streams, and foaming waterfalls, and the roaring, booming ocean. But they speak still more distinctly of green fields and blossoming trees and luscious fruit and golden grain.

There is mercy and helpfulness in the voice of

our Savior. It is vain to attempt to localize it by quoting particular sayings of Jesus. As well attempt to localize a general rain. It is everywhere present. Love speaks whenever Christ speaks. It may be the major tone; it may be an overtone; it may be an undertone. But the attentive listener hears it always, when he hears the "voice which is as the sound of many waters."

This is what transforms the desert waste of human life into an Elysian paradise, redolent with the fragrant flowers of Christian character, melodious with the glad songs of the redeemed, abounding in the luscious fruits of Christian endeavor and golden with the grain of righteousness and brotherly love.

Have you heard your Savior's gracious voice? Have His words fallen as a gracious rain upon the parched soil of your soul? Has it caused your heart to blossom as the rose and to shed forth the sweet perfume of Christian love for the delectation of the weary wayworn travellers who crowd the avenues of life all about you? Has it quickened you to newness of life and caused you to bring forth fruit, much fruit, so that the hungry may be fed and your Father, and His Father, may be glorified?

THE LIGHT-HOLDING HAND

"He had in his right hand seven stars. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches"

Angels are messengers. To them was committed for proclamation the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men!"

The angels here designated were men; but, by the grace of God, in regard to their usefulness, they were also as stars; shining like stars whose character and life lit up and made glorious the night of a sin-darkened world; making it possible for the wayfaring man to direct his course aright, giving hope to the despondent and courage to the fearful; thus reflecting the beautiful and benignant light of the glorious Sun of Righteousness.

But what is the significance of the fact that He "had (them) in His right hand"? It was their lot to shine in a world which was largely dominated by those who loved the darkness better than the light, because their deeds were evil. These feared the light and many of them murderously hated those who brought it.

These lovers of darkness have often, very often, made use of all the powers of earth and hell at their command to get at Christian men, but they have always failed. They have indeed tortured the bodies of Christ's human lightbearers; they have scourged them; they have caused them to languish in prisons; they boiled them in

oil; they threw them to wild beasts; they tore them limb from limb; they burned them at the stake. But they have never been able to dim a single one of these lights in Christ's right hand. Indeed, the more they were tortured the brighter was the light which they gave forth, the light of the truth of the saving, and keeping, and comforting power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

John, the revelator himself, was one of the brightest of these. And how safely that great hand, in which he abode with such implicit confidence, did keep him!

It is said that he once fell into the hands of a band of robbers. Immediately he became a messenger of Christ to them, and to such good purpose that not only their chief, but through him many of the other robbers were converted, and some who had been great sinners became great converts to the Christian religion.

At another time he was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil. But even there that mighty hand protected him, and brought him forth unscathed.

Then they banished him to the Isle of Patmos, but even that lonely island was found to be as the very hand of Christ; and that banishment intended to prevent that "star" from shining, only caused it to blaze forth with redoubled splendor, revealing by its light the wonderful portrait of the Son of God here dealt with, beside the many other wonderful things which the revelator saw, giving us at last a look upon the very streets of the New Jerusalem itself.

At about this time, Paul made his appearance in the firmament of Christians. He had been one of those who fought most vehemently against Christ. However, he had not been a lover of darkness; he had only been blind. So God graciously allowed a great light to shine upon him, which blinded his physical eyes for a season but opened those of his spirit. Then the gentle Ananias became an angel of Christ to him, delivering the message of truth, and life, and light. And, behold the scales fell from Paul's eyes and he was able to see that the hand against which he had been fighting was the nail-pierced hand of the long looked-for Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Meek and penitent as the chiefest of sinners, but with childlike faith and confidence, he immediately entrusted himself to that great hand, and Christ made of him a Christian and an Apostle of the first magnitude.

But evil men, enraged above measure by the loss of one of their most valuable tools, sought to move earth and hell to set his influence at naught. But they reckoned without considering "The hand," for it was invisible to them. It frustrated all their attempts, which were many, and various, and diabolical, and held Paul safely. Again the only result of this persecution was that it intensified the brightness of the light with which this human luminary shone.

At Antioch, he let his light shine brightly, and next in the dark regions of Asia Minor. Crossing over into Europe, his presence enlightened

Thrace, flashed like a meteor over Mars Hill, and shone with steady brilliance in Corinth. Soon Paul was back in the city where, spiritually blind, he had spent some time. Thence he went to Cæsarea, where he brought light to dwellers on the Mediterranean from the lighthouse of a prison-cell. Finally the light of what he was arose above the city of the Cæsars, where it shone as the brilliant morning star of a new day for all Europe; indeed, for all the world.

And the light of that man has retained its luster even until this day. It still shines as brightly as ever, and all the world is brighter and better because of it. It has lit up the way and made possible much of the best endeavor of the world; it sparkles and scintillates in the matchless epistles which Paul left as a great heritage of religious literature to the world. It is reflected in much of our best literature. Indeed, we are still walking in the light which this man radiated.

And that life was able to give forth its light only because it was safely held in the right hand of the "one who was like unto the Son of man," as without that protection its light would have been snuffed out in an instant.

That first company of Christian believers has been multiplied a thousand times, until they have become, indeed, as the stars of heaven for multitude; yea, as the sands of the seashore in number. They are referred to as "a great cloud of witnesses." And such they are indeed. Each one witnesses for Christ. Each one, so to speak,

sends forth a beam of the light of the Gospel, revealing the fact that there is salvation from sin and death, and that there is endless, blissful, abundant life for whosoever will repent of his sins and believe on Jesus Christ, and accept Him as his Savior.

How wonderful that the Prince of This World, with all his power, with all his guile and craftiness and poisonous rage, with the assistance of all the vast multitude of his cohorts both of demons and of men, should never yet have been able effectually to limit the influence of any life which implicitly follows Christ. His hand is indeed mighty to save and to keep. Those who are there held need have no fear of the wiles and the rage of the lovers of darkness. "They shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid."

There are two requirements, however, for each one so committed to Christ.

First: he must be His disciple; he must let his light shine; he must be a messenger of Christ to the world; he must bear testimony to the truth of the glad tidings of salvation through Christ Jesus. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

Let no one think that a formal assent to the truths of Christianity, the repeating of certain prescribed formulas, brings safety. Nor let any one depend upon his own righteousness for salvation. And let no one delude himself with the vain idea that, since God is good, the wages of sin

is not death. The only ones who are safe in the hand of Jesus are those who shine for Him, having been transformed, by the power of the Holy Spirit, into the image of the Sun of Righteousness. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

The second requisite is that he should abide voluntarily, confidently, and obediently in his Lord and Savior.

Jesus invites whosoever will to come unto Him, but He coerces no one. He never interferes with our freedom of will. If we are His, it is because we want to be. It is ours to choose between Him and the world; remembering that the consequence of our choice is either eternal salvation or eternal doom. His loving voice is ever calling us; His tender smile of welcome is ever ready for us; His great safe hand is ever open to us; but it is ours to enter or to refrain from entering. Ours the freedom! Ours the responsibility! Ours the consequences!

And when we come, we must come in confidence, trusting Him for all and with our all, withholding nothing. We cannot claim His protection if we still trust in ourselves or aught else beside Him. We cannot gain admittance into His keeping unless we bring all our possessions, our talents and our capabilities with us. Remember Ananias and Sapphira. Death, spiritual death, will overtake every one who attempts to do as they did; and the spiritually dead cannot shine

for Jesus; therefore there is no room for them in His keeping power.

Our entering into fellowship with Him is entirely voluntary, but when we do so we must submit to His will. With our lives as with our lips we must pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." The kingdom of Heaven is the kingdom of harmony, the kingdom in which its citizens live in harmony with their great Sovereign. "And this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous," because they are inspired by God's love for us, and they are kept by us on account of our love for Him. When love sits enthroned both in the heart of the subject and in the heart of the sovereign, how can any commandment be grievous! "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," are the words of Him who invites us to occupy a place in His great protecting right hand. We just need to shine for Him; we just need to reflect the glorious light of His great love in our daily walk and conversation; we just need to be "epistles of Christ,....known and read of all men."

THE SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD

"Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword"

When the Revelator speaks of the sharp two-edged sword which proceeded out of the "mouth of Jesus," let us remember that he is still describing our Savior and not some fierce warrior.

And yet this sword is an offensive weapon, for He never used it to defend Himself when attacked. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Thousands of words flowed from His lips in behalf of others, but when there was occasion for self-defense, this formidable weapon remained within its scabbard.

It is then an offensive weapon, a weapon which He uses against the enemy of the souls of men, the devil of falsehood, the lie.

This is perhaps the greatest and most dangerous foe mankind has. Some would say that "sin" is the greatest. But what is sin? Sin is believing the false to be true, namely, that it is to men's advantage to sin, to do wrong. If this is not true, then men are not reasonable beings. It was certainly true in mother Eve's case. She ate of the forbidden fruit, because she believed the lie the Devil told her. And mankind has

from that day to this followed in her footsteps.

This enemy can be attacked effectively only by the use of the two-edged sword of truth. On this weapon, and on this weapon alone, Jesus has placed His reliance in His great warfare against error.

Let us feel its "edges" so that we may get an idea of its effectiveness.

Jesus unsheathed it and struck a terrific blow at error on His first public appearance. It flashed out in these words, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

The sword here cuts in two directions. Two great falsehoods are laid bare. The first is one with which humanity has been deluding itself from time immemorial. It is that man is all right as he is by nature. This lie is especially effective when a man tells it to himself. It produces self-righteousness, and vanity, and that blindness which results in millions falling into the bottomless pit. "You are not all right," says Jesus in effect. "You are all wrong. You are on the road which leads to destruction. You are doomed to perdition. Turn around and forsake your evil way, or you are lost forever. Repent ye." How the authoritative words of Christ do rip open that old lie and expose its rottenness! What filthy rags they show our righteousness to be!

The second lie is one which the Devil uses only when the first has lost its effectiveness. It is this: "Men are indeed wicked: they are cor-

rupt, so corrupt that there is no hope. This is particularly the case with you. You were born in sin and into sinful environments. You are a sinner and you can't help it, no matter what you may do about it; so you might as well keep on sinning without making any effort to stop. There is no hope for you anyway." Christ meets successfully this stifling old lie with a great truth, namely this, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." There is hope. Help is at hand. If you will but turn about and accept this help, you may break the bands of sin and enter into harmonious relationship with your heavenly Father. That is the "kingdom of heaven" which is "at hand."

Jesus also has a word which lays bare two prevalent falsehoods concerning earthly treasures: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal."

The first lie which is here dealt with, is the assertion that it is profitable to "lay up treasures upon earth," which is taken to mean gathering more material goods than one's needs require. This lie is believed by vast multitudes of people, to the great detriment of their happiness and usefulness. What a countless number of lives are wasted in chasing after wealth which is not needed nor used profitably when gained! And

that which we do not need and do not use properly will soon lose its quality as a real treasure. We may be able to hold the property but the moth and rust of declining interest in its possession will corrupt it as a real treasure. We may put our earthly treasures into such a strong box that no human thief can steal them, but we cannot keep time from stealing away our ability to enjoy them. Does a doddering old man enjoy the possession of a million dollars beyond the satisfaction of his needs? And soon death will snatch even that little away from him.

The other lie is the contrary assertion, namely, that it is not profitable to lay up treasures at all. The conclusion is that men ought therefore to live for and in the present only. This lie leads to improvidence and wasteful riotous living. It is as a moral dry-rot and a spiritual cankerworm in the heart of man. Christ strikes at this destructive lie when he says, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." In other words: It is possible and profitable to lay up treasures but they must be such as will endure and fit into the scheme of heaven. One of these treasures is character, built upon the principles laid down in the gospel. This is a treasure which not even the basest maligner can steal. Nor can the infirmity of age destroy its value. Indeed, it becomes better and richer with age. Nor can Death prevail against it, for to such as are builded upon the rock, Christ Jesus, Death is but a doorkeeper

who swings open the gates to eternal life. Is it not worth while to lay up such treasures?

Another such a treasure is the memory of loving, helpful deeds which we perform by means of the strength our Master supplies. What a treasure this is, and how impervious it is to the attacks of "moth and rust," and how impossible for thieves to "break through and steal" it! And how heavenly this treasure will make heaven! Indeed heaven would be impossible without it. In the judgment scene, which our Savior so graphically describes, the Judge makes the possession of this treasure the necessary prerequisite for entry into heaven. Only those who have done deeds of love and kindness to even "the least of these my brethren" may enter there. Does it not pay amply to lay up such treasures?

Jesus at no time spoke tenderer words than when he said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

The first falsehood here effectually dealt with is, that in this world of toil and strife there is no rest. How weary and heavy laden the world was and how the people longed for rest. But practically every one believed this falsehood. "There is no rest, no rest, no rest!" they sighed. And the worst of it was that both experience and the practice of the religious leaders seemed to con-

firm this conviction. To toil and strive continually seemed to be the lot of mankind, and to increase the burden of the people seemed to be the chief occupation of the priests. Darkness was upon the face of the earth, but into this darkness Christ's words fell as a flame of light from heaven. When He spoke, there was light and there was rest. "'Come unto me,' says the Master, 'and I will give you rest,' the precious boon for which all you heavy laden ones are longing. You have been believing a falsehood for there is indeed rest."

But Jesus had to deal with another lie before He could give any one real rest. That lie is that rest can be obtained only by ceasing from labor. "If I only didn't need to work any more, then I should have rest," has been the vain dream of millions of men. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me,....and ye shall find rest for your souls," is Christ's prescription for rest; not in ceasing from work, but in such work as will put our doing into harmony with the divine plan. Discord ceases, not when we cease marching, but when we learn to march in harmony with the music of the universe. Then the yoke which we wear will be easy, because we will be doing the work for which we were designed, and the burden which we bear will be light, because we will have on the yoke necessary to bear it. Cessation from activity is not rest. That is death. The living find rest in congenial activity.

But let us notice the effect of another stroke of

this sword. This time we turn to John's record: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

The first error which Jesus attacks in this passage is the insidious notion that men can do good without help from the outside; that, with their own unaided strength, they can bring forth fruit. Because men believe this falsehood, there is "much ado about nothing." People strive in great earnestness and sometimes deceive themselves and others into thinking that their doing is itself real fruit. But when the hungry would eat thereof, it is found to be a stone. Uplift and culture societies are formed, and because there is a little sap in the branches, they may succeed in bringing forth a few anemic blossoms. Then the world is summoned to behold the wonder of the achievement. But soon the blossoms wither and no real fruit appears. Not long thereafter the branches also wither, and then there is another society ready for the scrap heap. "Without me ye can do nothing." The best aspirations of the man who does not draw his life and inspiration from above will soon evaporate in the fierce heat of selfishness which is his natural heritage.

But while one error is thus laid bare, there is need of exposing a still more dangerous one.

This is the contrary assertion, that it is not possible for human beings to do good at all. Evil is dominant in the world and it must always remain so. Since there is no power in *man* to overcome it, it can never be overcome. This is the attitude of the genuine pessimist. Those who believe this falsehood, fail to recognize the presence of Christ as the Vine, and the fact that the branches may be in living contact with Him. They fail to recognize the fact that there is a greater power than man in the world, and that this power may manifest itself in and through man; and that when man is in living contact with this power, then and then only, can man live a good, wholesome, helpful, fruitful life. "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The branch brings forth fruit, not for its own benefit, but for the benefit of others. Whosoever will may pluck and enjoy this fruit except the branch which produced it by means of the sap which it drew from the vine. That which we produce for ourselves is not fruit.

In conclusion, let us remind ourselves of the fact that it is our Savior who wields this sword. If it should at any time cut into our own spiritual anatomy, let us take notice of the fact that it is then being used as a surgeon's knife in the hand of a benevolent and skillful surgeon, who is cutting away the cancer of error which is still gnawing at our vitals. Such an operation is the only thing that can save us.

THE GLORY OF HIS COUNTENANCE

"And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength"

This is the climax of the Revelator's description of Jesus Christ. Oh, the glory of our Savior's face! Surely there is nothing in the physical world like this glory of noonday sun with which to liken it. Although this simile is hardly adequate, yet it is an excellent figure of speech, for there are many resemblances between the glory of Christ and the light of the sun.

We try to bring this glory nearer to our finite comprehension by giving it a name. It is the name by which we designate the most precious characteristic of personality, namely love. Surely the glory of our Savior's countenance is His matchless love shining forth from it. This is the supreme glory of the Son of Man, and it was the perception of this glory that made the disciples so sure that "in him dwelt all the fullness of the godhead bodily." It was the evidence of His divine-human nature. God is love; Jesus Christ is love.

Love is His dominant characteristic. It colors His entire personality. It manifests itself in His every thought, and word, and deed. Love sent Him from heaven to the lowly manger of Bethlehem. Love drew Him along the steep, hard,

rugged pathway of His earthly ministry. Love caused Him to drain the gall-cup of Gethsemane to its dregs. Love drew Him over the thorn-crowned, cross-strewn *Via Dolorosa*. Love lifted Him to the cruel cross of Calvary, bursting there into its most transcendent splendor and drawing all men unto Him.

That is what the Revelator was trying to describe.

And, as the full splendor of sunlight is not revealed until it shines through raindrops, so also was the rainbow glory of God's love not revealed until it shone through the Savior's human life, and manifested itself in a glorious rainbow of divine attributes.

Thinking of that figure, what an insignificant thing a raindrop is, and yet how wonderfully it reveals the marvelous riot of color of which each tiny sunbeam is composed! Blue, yellow, green, violet, indigo, orange and red and all the tints and shades between! Human life may be thought insignificant but it was through the human life of Christ that God revealed the manifold glory of His love.

Let us notice how the love of Christ is manifested in various phases, even as the rainbow consists in so many different colors which blend into one glorious whole.

When we think of Christ's characteristics, His great self-abnegation comes immediately to mind. Is not His self-abnegation love as surely as the blue of the rainbow is light? "He being in the

form of God, counted it not a thing to be held onto to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

Is not this the *true blue* of divine love?

We are also impressed with the wisdom which our Savior manifested in the means which He employed to accomplish His work. He chose twelve simple unspoiled men, instructed them in the principles of the Kingdom of God with marvelous skill and effectiveness, illustrated His teachings by living the Kingdom life in their midst and revealed the spirit which must be dominant in the Kingdom of God by showing with His own life and death that “the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Real wisdom is of the heart rather than of the head.

Was not this wisdom the *bright yellow* of the rainbow of His divine love?

And His spirit of ministry, that which caused Him to transform the water into wine to relieve the dilemma of the wedding feast; to feed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes; to come to the rescue of the storm-tossed disciples in the night watches; to restore sight to

blind Bartimæus; to cause the lame and halt to leap with restored strength and gladness; to lay His hands on lepers and cleanse them; to heal all manner of impotent folk; to halt the bier of the widow's only son and restore him to her alive; and to preach the glad tidings of salvation to the poor.

Was not all this the *restful green* of the rainbow of His divine love, His entire activity on earth but the manifestation of love?

And the patience with which he bore all manner of hardships, and the disappointments which the obtuseness, pettiness and failings of His disciples must have caused Him, and the base insults, inhuman injustice and diabolical cruelty of His enemies.

Was not this divine patience the *violet* color in the rainbow of His love? "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." His patience with us is certainly an expression of love.

Another of His characteristics was of a sterner type. It manifested itself in the cleansing of the Temple, the excoriation of the hypocritical Pharisees, and in His denunciation of the cities which had rejected Him and His gospel. It is that which caused Him to insist that justice shall obtain.

Is not this the *indigo* of the rainbow of His divine love? The thunder of His righteous indignation is indeed an evidence of love, for the unjust cannot enjoy the bliss of the Kingdom of God, and as long as injustice is practiced, the

Kingdom cannot be fully established. He insists on justice because without it those whom He loves cannot attain unto the happiness which He would have them enjoy. The rod in the hands of our Savior is an evidence of true love.

And then there was the manifestation of His divine power: His power over the winds and the waves; His power to alleviate all manner of physical ailments; His power to raise the dead, both physical and spiritual; His power to conquer hell, death, the grave.

Was not this the *strong orange* of the rainbow of His divine love? Never was His power used for selfish or vain purposes. He did not cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple to gain notoriety; He did not command the stones to become bread that His hunger might be appeased; He did not call the fire down from heaven upon the villagers of Samaria who refused to receive Him; He did not call for twelve legions of angels to beat back the soldiers who took Him captive. Never did He use His divine power, except when love demanded it, as when the heartbroken widow was bearing her only son to the grave, or when the light and gladness had departed from the home of Jairus in the death of the little daughter, or when His beloved retreat in Bethany had been made desolate by the black hand of death.

But the rainbow has still another color. This is the brightest and richest of them all. The characteristic in our Savior which it typifies mani-

fested itself in His coming to earth; it showed itself all along the rough pathway of His earthly life; it reached its full climax, when He voluntarily consented to die as a ransom for many upon the cross of Calvary. It was the spirit of self-sacrifice.

Is not this the *warm blood-red* of the rainbow of His divine love? “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” “God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Such is the glory of His countenance. The same love had illuminated the face of our Heavenly Father all through the ages, but how marvelously the earthly life of His Son enriched our conceptions thereof! The Son of Man revealed to us the wondrous beauty of our Father’s face. For it was God who “so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

That divine light still shines, but its full glory can be revealed only when it shines through men. Then it appears as a beautiful rainbow upon the dark clouds of human life.

Is your life refracting this divine love-light and bringing to view its beautiful colors? Is your life revealing the true blue of self-abnegation, the bright yellow of divine wisdom, the restful green of benevolent activity, the tender violet of divine patience, the stern indigo of

righteousness, the strong orange of divine power and the warm red of self-sacrifice?

This is our glorious, God-appointed mission. "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

The rainbow is the raindrops' way of bearing witness to the sun. The purer the raindrop, the more perfect will be the refraction, and the brighter will be the colors which it reveals. The purer our lives are from the dross of sin, the more perfectly will we be able to reveal the great love of Christ to our fellow men.

Well might we despair in contemplating this great task of becoming pure enough to reveal the love of Christ to our fellow men, if it were not for the fact that the Son, whose glory our lives are to reveal, Himself first draws us up out of the cesspool of sin into the pure air of the Kingdom of God. If we allow ourselves to be drawn up out of sin and our lives to be dominated by the love of Christ then by His grace we become fit refractors of the sunlight of God's love.

How marvelous are the works of our God!

What a wonderful portrait of our Savior the beloved John was privileged to paint! We have seen that like unto "a son of man" is Jesus Christ indeed, but the garment of flesh with which He is clothed only veils, but can not hide His divine personality. That which binds His garment of flesh to His divine person is a beautiful golden

girdle, His human life. His thought life is as "white as white wool, white as snow," and His intellect lights up the spiritual darkness of the world like a "flame of fire." His feet, His earthly life, are as bright and spotless as burnished brass for they were refined in the furnace of poverty, toil and deadly persecution. The range of His expressive voice is as the various sounds of many waters. His great right hand holds safely the stars which shine for Him. Out of His mouth proceedeth the sharp, two-edged sword of truth. But the matchless beauty of the portrait, that which stamps it with divinity, is the love which causes His countenance to be "as the sun shineth in his strength."

Look and live!

"And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

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Hulsebus, Gerhard.

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